
American Embassy Newsletter for American Citizens – Volume 2: June, 2006

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1. Farewell to Consul General William M. Bartlett

We say farewell to Consul General William M. Bartlett and his wife Christina “Tina” Bartlett who will be leaving India this month. Bill and Tina arrived in India in 2002. In his job as Consul General, Bill Bartlett oversees the entire consular operation at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, as well as the consulates in Mumbai, Chennai and Calcutta. Bill has had previous assignments with the Department of State in Washington, DC, Germany, the United Kingdom, Nigeria and El Salvador. Bill’s next position will be at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand. We wish Bill and Tina the greatest success in the future, and thank Bill for his incredible contribution to the consular operation in India. Bill’s job was particularly challenging since demand for U.S. visas and American citizen services in India is growing faster than at almost any other location in the world!

Bill’s replacement expects to arrive in India in August, and we will introduce him in our next newsletter. Until then, Deputy Consul General Richard M. Sherman will serve as acting Consul General.

2. 2006 Federal Elections.

Now is the time to request your absentee ballot for the 2006 U.S. Federal Elections scheduled for Tuesday, November 7, 2006. Every seat in the U.S. House of Representatives will be at stake, as well as one-third of the seats in the U.S. Senate. There are many important state and local races as well. Here are some handy questions and answers to help you to vote this year:

Q1. How do I request an absentee ballot?

A1. You can fill in a form called the Federal Post-Card Application, which is available at the Embassy’s American Citizen Services Unit, or can be easily downloaded at www.fvap.gov (click on “Forms”). You must mail it to the local election official in for your U.S. voting address. That information is also available at www.fvap.gov. The Embassy’s American Citizen Services Unit has a book that lists voting procedures and addresses for every voting jurisdiction. Please call us or stop by, and we can help make sure your request for a ballot is prepared and sent properly. Another handy tool appears at www.overseasvotersfoundation.org which automatically prepares your ballot request and provides an address based on information you enter.

Q2. What if I am not registered?

A2. Your request for an absentee ballot in most cases also constitutes a request to be registered to vote.

Q3. What if I don't have a U.S. address?

A3. If you don't have a permanent U.S. address, you may still vote using the last address where you resided in the United States.

Q4. If I voted in 2004, won't I automatically receive an absentee ballot?

A4. You should, but there are 3,000 different voting jurisdictions in the United States and nobody's perfect. It doesn't hurt to send in an absentee ballot request. Better safe than sorry!

Q5. Do I have to mail the ballot request myself?

A5. You can mail it yourself, or the Embassy will mail it for you. We have special postage-paid envelopes for this purpose. Note that this is the only kind of mail that the Embassy will mail for you, so take advantage of it!

Make sure your vote counts. Do not procrastinate. Order your absentee ballot today!

3. Independence Day Celebration at U.S. Embassy

All American citizens living in or visiting India are invited to attend the Independence Day celebration at the U.S. Embassy!

Date: Saturday, 1 July 2006

Time: 6:00 p.m. - midnight (no admittance after 9:00 p.m.)

Place: ACSA Ballfield (entrance at Gate E, the "ACSA Gate," on Panchsheel Marg across from New Sikkim House, in the Chanakya Puri neighborhood, New Delhi)

Price: Rs. 150 per person (children under 5 admitted for free)

Gates will open at 5:30 p.m. A formal presentation, including welcoming remarks from Ambassador David C. Mulford, will take place from 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. Entry to the ACSA ballfield will be restricted during this presentation, so please arrive early! There will be games, fireworks, special commemorative T-shirts for sale, and more! Those attending will be able to purchase coupons for food and drinks.

Admission Guidelines: This party is open ONLY to American citizens and their immediate family members. An "immediate" family member means (i) for American citizen adults, your spouse and children, or (ii) for American citizen minors, your parents and brothers & sisters. Unfortunately, extended family members such as cousins, aunts & uncles, grandparents, etc. who are not American citizens are not permitted to attend this party.

Tickets & RSVP Instructions: Tickets are available for purchase in advance at the American Center (24 Kasturba Gandhi Marg, near Connaught Place, New Delhi), the American Citizen Services Unit at the U.S. Embassy's Consular Section (enter at Gate 6 on Nyaya Marg) or at ACSA (ACSA members only please). You can also buy tickets at the door, but ONLY if you R.S.V.P. in advance by sending the following information for each member of your family group via e-mail to acsnd@state.gov no later than Wednesday, June 28:

- * Name
- * Nationality
- * Passport number
- * If you are not an American citizen, your relationship to the American in your group

Questions? Ask Betsy or Mukesh by calling 2419-8316, or by writing to trucooking@yahoo.com or acsnd@state.gov.

4. Avian Influenza Update

India has experienced three outbreaks of avian influenza in poultry in February and March of this year. The outbreaks occurred in rural areas of the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. In each case, the Government of India ordered the culling of tens of thousands of birds. The government has reported that the H5N1 avian influenza virus was contained in each of those outbreaks, and that no other outbreaks have been reported. There have been no reports of any human cases of the H5N1 virus in India so far. To keep abreast of this changing situation, you are encouraged to periodically check the Embassy website at <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov>, and click on "Avian Influenza Update" on the right-hand side of the page. In certain cases, we will be sending warden messages regarding avian influenza, if the situation so warrants. That site contains a series of Questions and Answers that can help you and your family prepare for a possible influenza pandemic.

5. Consular Information Sheet for India

The Embassy recently updated the Consular Information Sheet for India. The Consular Information Sheet provides the U.S. Government's analysis of important information for travelers to India, including visa information, security, health, crime, etc. You are encouraged to consult the Consular Information Sheet, and to share it with your family or friends who plan to visit India, to ensure that you take common sense precautions when traveling around the country.

The Consular Information Sheets for India and Bhutan are available on the Embassy website at http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/consular_information_sheet.html. Consular Information Sheets for every country in the world are available on the U.S. State Department's travel website at <http://travel.state.gov>.

6. Income Tax Changes for Expats

Congress recently enacted important tax legislation. Although most attention was paid to the extension of certain previously-enacted tax cuts that were scheduled to expire, additional changes were included in the legislation of interest to Americans living and working overseas. For example, the amount of earned income that can be excluded by most Americans working overseas was increased. However, favorable treatment of certain other types of compensation provided to expats, such as housing provided by an employer, was restricted. These tax changes are retroactive to January 1 of this year. Interesting articles on these tax changes have appeared in major newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal and the International Herald Tribune. See, for example, <http://www.ihrt.com/articles/2006/05/26/news/ataxes.php>.

7. Precautions to Be Taken During Demonstrations

The Embassy's Regional Security Office wishes to remind American citizens that demonstrations in India often occur spontaneously and can escalate with little warning thus, posing safety risks to bystanders as well as participants. American citizens should monitor news reports regarding the location of protests and modify movements accordingly. Please report violent disturbances to the Regional Security Office or the American Citizen Services immediately so that warnings can be issued if appropriate. Both offices can be reached through the Embassy operator at 2419-8000.

Demonstrations that occur in Delhi are usually restricted to specified areas by the police. The number of demonstrations usually increases when Parliament is in session:

Budget and summer session	Mid February to End of May
Monsoon session	Mid July to Mid August
Winter Session	Mid November to Mid December

Sometimes these demonstrations turn violent. In Delhi, demonstrations normally take place at India Gate, Jantar Mantar, the old part of the Delhi at Ram Lila Ground or on Parliament Street. An advisory will be issued by the Embassy if information is received that indicates American interests are being specifically targeted.

American citizens should take the following precautions:

- Be alert, cautious, and be prepared for demonstrations to suddenly occur
- If caught up in a demonstration, take the quickest route that leads away from the crowd
- Report the location of violent demonstrations to the Regional Security Office or to the American Citizen Services as soon as possible.

8. FBI Fights Cyber Crime

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) is a reporting and referral system for Internet crime complaints from people in the United States and around the world. Through an online complaint form and a team of agents and analysts, IC3 serves the public and U.S. and international law enforcement agencies investigating Internet crime. Internet crime, also called cyber crime, is any illegal activity arising from one or more Internet components, such as Web sites, chat rooms, or e-mail. Cyber crime can include everything from non-delivery of goods or services and computer intrusions (hacking) to intellectual property rights abuses, economic espionage (theft of trade secrets), online extortion, international money laundering, identity theft, and a growing list of other Internet-facilitated offenses.

Today at the IC3 office in Fairmont, West Virginia, six federal agents and approximately 40 analysts from industry and academia receive Internet-related criminal complaints from the public, then research, develop, and refer the complaints to federal, state, local, and international law enforcement or regulatory agencies and multi-agency task forces for investigation. Through an IC3 Web site (www.ic3.gov), people from all over the world can file complaints about Internet crime. IC3 sometimes helps law enforcement agencies by researching and building the initial case.

A growing group of international agencies are involved in fighting cyber crime. The IC3 works with law enforcement officials in many countries, including Australia and the United Kingdom. IC3 representatives also attend periodic meetings of the G8 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United Kingdom) Subgroup on High-Tech Crime, part of which works to combat cyber crime and enhance cyber investigations.

The IC3 and the CIRFU projects are a constantly evolving work in progress. Along the way, IC3 agents and analysts revisit what is working and what is not working, and constantly seek out experts and sources of intelligence to get smarter about cyber crime and learn how to more effectively fight it.

9. ACS Location & Hours and Upcoming Holidays

Our hours: The American Citizen Services Unit is open to the public from Monday to Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. We are available outside of these hours

for emergency services. To contact us, call (011) 2419-8000, ext. 4249 or 8562 or 4040 or 4032. You can also e-mail us at acsnd@state.gov.

Upcoming Indian and American holidays on which the Embassy will be closed are July 4 (Independence Day), August 9 (Raksha Bandhan), August 15 (Indian Independence Day), August 16 (Janmashtami) and September 4 (Labor Day). The Embassy is always available for emergency services for American citizens.

If you believe you may have missed a recent "warden message" sent to American citizens in India, all recent warden messages issued by the Embassy are available on the Embassy website at http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/warden_information.html.
